
An SAB Synopsis

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A Summary of a Just-Released SAB Report

April 28, 1998

Review of the FY 1999 Presidential Budget Request for the Office of Research and Development: EPA-SAB-RSAC-98-006

While the Science Advisory Board (SAB) of the US EPA applauded the process used by the EPA in developing its first goal-based science budget, it has expressed concern about the adequacy of the Agency's proposed budget. The SAB indicated that the science budget may not be sufficient, in a number of areas, to generate the scientific and technological information needed to fulfill the Agency's mission to protect human health and to safeguard the environment.

The SAB examined the Agency's Presidential Budget Request for the Office of Research and Development (ORD) in a public session on February 26-27, 1998. On March 11, two SAB reviewers testified on their findings before the Energy and the Environment Subcommittee of the House Science Committee. The report was formally approved by the SAB's Executive Committee on April 15, 1998 and sent to the Administrator today.

For the first time, after years of the SAB's reviewing ORD budget requests, this SAB report explicitly compliments the Agency on a clear, well-organized presentation that links its research requests to the ORD Strategic Plan and the Agency's overall Strategic Plan. This goal-oriented articulation of the ORD budget is a welcome improvement over the solely media-oriented presentations of prior years.

At the same time, the members expressed concern that the research budget is eroding relative to the overall EPA budget request. This trend is occurring at a time when environmental problems are more complex and probably need more scientific insights than the budget can deliver. The report cites several areas in which budgets are not likely to be sufficient to meet the goals established by the Agency and ORD in their Strategic Plans. These areas included particulate matter, endocrine disruptors, ecosystem protection, global climate change, waste site remediation technologies, microbial pathogens, and indoor air.

While generally endorsing the research budget priorities, the SAB report notes that more should be done to develop an evaluation process that can lead to better accounting of existing expenditures, both intramural and extramural, and to better assess needs for new research areas in emerging environmental threats.

A complete copy of this report from the SAB's Research Strategies Advisory Committee is available

1. On the SAB Website [<http://www.epa.gov/sab>]
2. By request from the SAB office through Email [pope.derrick@epa.gov], or
3. By fax [202-260-1889].

